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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE 0319

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2016

TAGS: PREL PTER TU IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQIS AND KURDS INITIATE ACTION AGAINST PKK

REF: A. ANKARA 4163

1B. BAGHDAD 2628

Classified By: Charge d,Affaires Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary: Chief of Staff (COS) Karadaghi told Poloff on July 23 that President Talabani was following up on his pledges to curb PKK activity in Iraq. The day after Talabani issued the order to shut down PKK offices in Baghdad, the COS was checking with the MOI on the status of that request. While no immediate arrests of PKK leaders are expected, action on closing the offices should come within one week, Karadaghi said. A PUK/KDP delegation was ready to travel to Ankara for talks as soon as the Turkish government gives the go ahead. President Talabani issued a public statement on July 22 that Iraqi territory should not be used to launch attacks against Turkey but insisted that Iraq's sovereignty should be respected. Turkish CDA Aydin Selcen called his July 22 meeting with Talabani positive but said Ankara was waiting to see concrete steps before determining if Talabani's pledges are serious. Not discouraging Kurdish contacts with the PKK to call for a cease-fire, he nonetheless brusquely stated that Turkey will not negotiate with PKK. End summary.

12. (S) President Jalal Talabani's Chief of Staff Kamran Karadaghi told Poloff on July 23 that based on an agreement between President Talabani and KRG President Barzani, action will be taken against the PKK in Iraq. Offices in the north will be shut down soon - "by next week" said Karadaghi. Talabani instructed Minister of Interior Bolani to shut down the three PKK affiliated offices in Baghdad and Karadaghi was checking on the status of that request on a regular basis. Karadaghi said that arrests of PKK leaders will not take place immediately but stressed that Talabani was serious and may make arrests in the near future. The PUK/KDP delegation was ready to travel to Ankara as soon as the government of Turkey agrees to see them. President Talabani issued a public statement on July 22 that Iraqi territory should not be used to launch attacks against Turkey but insisted that Iraq's sovereignty should be respected.

13. (S) Turkish CDA Aydin Selcen told Poloff on July 23 that his meeting with President Talabani on July 22 went well but Ankara and he were waiting for results before making any judgments. Referring to Talabani's offer to shut down PKK offices and put the PKK on notice, Selcen said "These are positive steps on paper but we will have to see if they are serious." If the Iraqis are serious, he added, the three PKK affiliated offices near the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad should be closed by next week. He said that Talabani called Minister of Interior Bolani with instructions to shut the

offices during their meeting and wondered whether this was just a show. PKK offices in the KRG will be shut down later in a step-by-step agreement with Barzani, said Selcen. He was dismissive of Talabani's offer to dialogue with the PKK on a cease-fire. It is up to the GOI if they want to negotiate, but Turkey will not negotiate with the PKK. He said he told Talabani that Turkey wants PKK leaders arrested and extradited to Turkey. He said Talabani told him that PKK leaders will be arrested if they are seen in the towns but the Kurds will not go into the mountains after them. Selcen said he passed to Ankara the proposal of a visit by a joint PUK/KDP delegation and was waiting for a response.

¶4. (S) Selcen said that the Turks for two years have repeatedly asked the Iraqis to close the PKK offices. Speaking about the prospect of trilateral talks on the PKK in the future, Selcen made it a point to highlight that trilateral means the governments of Turkey, Iraq and the USG - not Turkey, the Kurds, and the USG as Talabani wants. He repeatedly sought assurances that PM Maliki was informed of and in agreement on the steps to resolve the PKK problem.

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